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Advertising value equivalence—PR's orphan metric

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ABSTRACT

The academic approach to measurement and evaluation has long favoured social science methodologies (Broom & Dozier, 1990; Michaelson & Stacks, 2011; Stacks, 2002), but there has been persistent, widespread practice use of advertising value equivalence (AVE) to express the economic and financial value of public relations activity. This paper investigates the evolution of AVE and discusses whether it arose from clippings agencies, press agency or other influences on public relations, such as advertising and product promotion.

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1. Introduction

AVE (advertising value equivalence) is a disputed method of calculating the value of public relations activity in the form of editorial publicity. “AVEs are calculated by multiplying the column centimetres of editorial print coverage and seconds of broadcast publicity by the respective media advertising rates. In most applications, the total amount of coverage is ‘valued’ as if it was advertising, irrespective of its tone and content” (Macnamara, 2008, p. 1). Although widely used by practitioners, it has never been considered to be a valued research method in academic literature (Watson & Noble, 2007). The influential *Research Methods in Public Relations* (Broom & Dozier, 1990) dismissed AVE tersely as having no “theoretical or logical justification” (p. 63). Some industry commentators are highly critical. McKeown (1995) describes it as “an early attempt to assign spurious monetary values to media relations activities” (p. 149) whilst Phillips (2001) refers to it as “voodoo”, “make-believe” and “inventive nonsense” (p. 227). Wilcox, Cameron, Ault, and Agee (2005) say AVE is “really comparing apples and oranges” (p. 197). Lindenmann (2006) added to the dismissal of AVE's validity by arguing that the notion of equivalence was not reciprocal: “opportunity to ‘buy’ advertising in space that has been specifically allocated to editorial coverage simply does not exist” (p. 21).

It is, however, widely used by practitioners, and as Noble (2010) comments, ironically, “the extent to which it is criticised by commentators and researchers... is only matched by the extent that the concept is used in practice” (p. 1). An international study of more than 500 public relations practitioners reported at the First European Summit on Measurement (Berlin, July 2009) found AVE was the third most popular measurement method for judgement of communication effectiveness. It ranked after clippings counts and internal reviews, and was first amongst methods of judging the value of public relations activity. Some 35% of respondents were ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ with it as a measurement tool (Daniels & Gaunt, 2009).

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Although the academic approach to measurement and evaluation has mostly favoured social science methodologies (Broom & Dozier, 1990; Michaelson & Stacks, 2011; Stacks, 2002), there has been persistent and widespread use of advertising value equivalence (AVE) by practitioners to express the financial value of public relations activity. The value is often boosted by multipliers which can range from 2.5 to 8.0 (Weiner & Bartholomew, 2006). These are “justified on the basis of the received wisdom that editorial coverage is more credible than advertising” (Noble, 2010, p. 2) although “there is no known objective research to support this claim” (Weiner & Bartholomew, 2006, p. 4).

The utility of AVE is that it is simple to calculate and suits the reporting demands of financially-driven managers and clients (Bussey, 2011; Morris & Goldsworthy, 2012; Newsom, VanSlyke Turk, & Kruckeberg, 2013). Morris and Goldsworthy (2012) explain the benefits:

The advantages of AVE are that it is relatively easy to calculate. . . Indeed it represents the only cheap, quick and easy way of putting a concrete monetary value on PR work. This is the language which business understands and is particularly important when budgets are under pressure (p. 232).

The view that public relations practitioners are bowing to management pressures in the use of AVE is endorsed by Leinemann and Baikaltseva (2004):

“Very often high-level managers – and especially financial controllers – like this measure since it gives them results in the language they speak: dollars. As a result PR managers are often forced to use this criterion” (p. 59).

2. Outlawing AVE

In July 2010, the public relations industry began the process of barring future use of advertising value equivalence (AVE) as a methodology for the measurement of public relations effectiveness with the adoption of the Barcelona Principles for PR Measurement (AMEC, 2010a). In the following year, the International Association for the Measurement and Evaluation of Communication (AMEC) used the term “outlawed” (AMEC, 2011). In the set of seven principles supported by 92% of delegates at the Second European Summit on Measurement held in Barcelona in June 2010, principle 5 was that: “AVEs are not the value of public relations”. The statement supporting this principle said:

Advertising value equivalents (AVEs) do not measure the value of public relations and do not inform future activity; they measure the cost of media space and are rejected as a concept to value public relations (AMEC, 2010b).

There has been an air of moral outrage about the longevity of AVE despite its debunking by academic researchers and serious practitioners. Shortly after the event, Robert W. Grupp writing about the Barcelona Principles for the Institute for Public Relations (IPR) commented that “The legitimate intent here is not to debate the validity of AVEs (which simply measure the cost of media space) but to move beyond this measure once and for all” (Grupp, 2010). During the second half of 2010, other public relations organisations supported the Barcelona Principles, especially in regard to AVE. The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) supported the initiative (PRSA, 2010). In the United Kingdom, the Chartered Institute for Public Relations (CIPR), which represents individual members, and the Public Relations Consultants Association (PRCA), the trade body for PR consultancies and in-house communication departments, both decided on new policy to cease recognizing AVE as a valid measurement technique. In November 2010, CIPR’s CEO Jane Wilson wrote:

AVEs cannot be a part of serious business communication because they have no relevance to the value, financial or otherwise, of an organisation. They don’t reflect what has actually been achieved. With any successful communications campaign there has to be a tangible result if it is to be deemed successful. Whether it’s a product or a perception, something has to have shifted (CIPR, 2010a).

CIPR undertook to lead policy on measurement and evaluation. It identified entries to its annual awards programme as the route to enforce its policy by stating that “AVEs will no longer be deemed an acceptable form of measurement and evaluation (M&E), and judges will be briefed to this effect when shortlisting each category’s entries” (CIPR, 2010a). PRCA’s chair Sally Costerton also announced that evaluation would be at the heart of best practices (PRCA, 2010). In addition to these national public relations organisations, the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management, the umbrella body for national public relations professional bodies, announced the Barcelona Principles as a new “global measurement standard” (Global Alliance, 2011).

3. The origins of AVE

This aim of this paper is to explore the origins of the AVE metric by considering the development of public relations measurement and evaluation methods and theory, and discussing possible influences and routes by which it became so obviously popular amongst practitioners. It will become apparent that it has never been given credibility by academics and serious practitioners (Macnamara, 2008; Paine, 2003) and was not proposed by the pioneers of public relations in any major countries. Indeed, for over 60 years there have been warnings against its use. Yet it has thrived and grown to be one of the mostly used judgments of economic effectiveness. AVE is an orphan offspring of public relations, without a family heritage and few credentials, but is aligned closely to that slightly wild world of publicity and consumer public relations where

communication management and Excellence theory are little-known concepts. Watson has referred to it as “a pernicious weed” (Geddes, 2011). However, a long tradition of media monitoring and of the use of clipping counts as a proxy methods of public relations effectiveness give clues as to its origins. [The paper is fully referenced as many references, critical to the historical narrative and discussion, date back decades.]

4. Early monitoring practices

From George Washington onwards, US presidents monitored newspapers in order to gain intelligence on what was being said about them and the views of fellow citizens (Lamme & Russell, 2010). In the 19th century, industries and groups from railroads to temperance societies and evangelists also tracked media coverage and public opinion. In the US and UK, news cuttings agencies were established in the latter part of the century. From some, there is lineage to today’s international computer-based evaluation companies (Watson, 2012).

The first publicity to be formed in the United States was the Publicity Bureau in Boston in 1900 (Cutlip, 1994). In its work for railroad interests, the Publicity Bureau systematically monitored press coverage using ‘The Barometer’, a card index of the attitudes of editors and media usage of publicity material. This allowed the agency to judge “whether a paper is “Good” or “Bad” from the standpoint of the railroads” (Cutlip, 1994, p. 21).

Although cuttings agencies monitored press coverage for clients, there was little early discussion of the measurement and evaluation of publicity or public relations activity. Arthur W. Page, who introduced opinion research widely at AT&T also organised media monitoring. Griese (2001) identified two studies in 1932 and 1933 of the use by newspapers of AT&T information. These were measured by the number of items published and the total of column inches of coverage.

By the late 1930s, measurement and evaluation methods were being used in the United States, notably by government (Lee, 2006). Batchelor (1938) referred to the monitoring and interpretation of media publicity for Toledo, Ohio during the Great Depression. “Ninety-one per cent of more than 72,000 clippings, representing newspaper circulations totalling more than one and half millions, were regarded as favourable to the city’s interests (p. 214).” In the UK, Hill (1937) also referred to media monitoring by boroughs and municipalities.

5. Advertising’s relationship with press agency

Tedlow’s discussion of the nascent relationship of advertising and public relations indicates likely formative influences on AVE. He argues there was a constant tension between the advertiser, who bought media space, and press agents/publicists. The advertiser could “be absolutely certain that the message appeared therein. When he hired a publicity man to concoct a stunt, he could not be sure whether or how the papers would carry it” (Tedlow, 1979, p. 171). Later he discussed the media owners’ dislike of press agents, whom they called “space grabbers” (p. 177) as they were able to get coverage in their pages at the third of the cost of advertising space. “One estimate was that if a press agent could deliver equal lineage to an advertisement at one-third the cost of paid space, advertising would end and with it newspaper revenue and reader confidence” (p. 177). This tension between media owners and press agents was also given considerable colour by Lee Trenholm, a ‘public relations counsellor’ in his 1938 *Public Opinion Quarterly* article, ‘Press Agents Irritate The Press’ (Trenholm, 1938). After using a broadsword of criticism of press agents and their “pufficity”, he turns to their claims of effectiveness:

It would be salutary for us to reflect occasionally upon this proposition that the press-agent is commercially a competitor rather than professionally a collaborator of the press and to gauge our press relations accordingly. Almost any publicity prospectus or reports this theory by pretensions to deliver or to have [author’s emphasis] *achieved fabulous values in advertising for fees representing a small percentage of what the same space would have cost the client at usual rates* (Trenholm, 1938, p. 673-674).

Tedlow (1979) and Trenholm (1938) clearly show that in the first 40 years of the last century in the US, there was a connection in the minds of advertisers, media owners, press agents and publicists of a relationship that expresses value equivalence between media coverage and advertising; whether it is in the fears of the media owners or its promotion by press agents and publicists seeking for business from clients. It is not a large step for informal methods of calculating values from press clippings provided by myriad city-based and regional services to be introduced without reference to experts in statistical validity. In the absence of specific archival information indicating a start date or action that created AVE, it can be posited that this method was in existence in the 1930s, albeit as a practice to gain new business, rather than as the measure of effectiveness as it would become.

6. First sight of AVE?

Advertising value equivalence made what may be its initial appearances in text in 1947 in the US and 1949 in the UK. The nature of the references makes it clear that it was an extant practice. There may be earlier references but they are not recorded in bibliographies such as Cutlip (1965) or in the many texts on public relations that burgeoned in the post-World War 2 period. This paper does not claim the example to follow is the very first reference but it indicates that the use of AVE may have arisen from publicity practices carried out alongside (or in competition with) advertising. Plackard and Blackmon (1947) introduced the concept of AVE in their book, *Blueprint for Public Relations*, rather tentatively. After discussing valuable

results from the “intangible realm – definitely present but not readily measured – namely good will, making friends, instilling confidence”, etc. (p. 4), they presented the notion of valuing media coverage:

Only in a general way can these benefits be valued in dollars and cents. Newspaper publicity on a certain national institution may reach 100,000 inches. If all the publicity is good, an equal amount of space may be said to be worth \$100,000. However, if the publicity is badly done, it could be more harmful than no publicity (Plackard & Blackmon, 1947, p. 4)

But later in the book, their cautious tone changed and Plackard and Blackmon provided a concrete example from a named clippings agency of the dollar valuation of media coverage, using the advertising value equivalence method:

Translated into dollars and cents value to Company X at a column-inch rate of \$1.06 (an average for large and small daily papers throughout the nation), the 169,629 column inches of material published in 1 year would be worth approximately \$179,806.74 if purchased as display advertising. Even eliminating 50 per cent of this amount to allow for unfavourable mentions (of which there were very few) and stories not wholly devoted to Company X, the projection would result in a value of almost \$90,000 being ascribed to the editorial space (p. 295)

It is notable that this exemplar uses a single national average metric for the calculation of AVE, which was a considerable task in the late 1940s when data collection was much more difficult than it is today. More recent practices, aided by computerised databases, calculate the media coverage according the rate cards or cost data for the specific media. Another point to note is that no multiplier is added to the calculation. This did not appear till the 1960s.

7. AVE in the UK

In the UK, the expansion of public relations was a post-World War 2 phenomenon. The first press agency, Editorial Services, had been set up by Basil Clarke in London in 1924 (L'Etang, 2004) but the establishment and real growth of public relations came as a result of journalists and propaganda experts coming out of government and the armed forces in 1945 with knowledge of news management and propaganda methods and the expansion of governmental information services (Anthony, 2012). The Institute of Public Relations (IPR) was established in 1948, mainly by governmental communicators in information officer posts, as the first step to professionalise their area of activity (L'Etang, 2004). From its outset, issues of evaluating public relations were discussed in the IPR's *Journal*: mostly as methods of collation of cuttings and transcripts, and how to do it cheaply (J. L'Etang, personal communication, January 10, 2011). Unlike the US with its interest in social sciences and university education, there was a strong anti-intellectual streak in the IPR. This was expressed by its 1950 President Alan Hess, a motor industry PRO, who reproached the “tendency for too much intellectualisation and too much market research mumbo-jumbo” (L'Etang, 2004, p. 75). So the discussion of public relations was often a ‘belt-and-braces’ consideration of practical issues. In 1949, shortly after IPR started to publish its *Journal*, the topic of valuing media coverage by advertising costs arose in the form of advice against its use by a founding member, F. Murray Milne:

F. Murray Milne (Wholesale Textile Association) emphasised that there should be no rivalry between public relations and advertising. It was a grave mistake for the PRO to try and evaluate his work at so many column inches calculated at advertising rates (IPR *Journal*, 1949, p. 4).

Later in the same edition, Milne again advised against the method:

Press cuttings are never measured in column inches and assessed at advertising rates. This practice has done more to undermine public relations than any other (IPR *Journal*, March 1949, p. 7).

A reasonable conclusion from Milne's advice to fellow practitioners is that a form of AVE was already in use in the UK's fledgling public relations sector and that it was already causing concern to industry leaders. L'Etang (2004) notes that the IPR “publicly disapproved of this method [AVE] for more than half a century. Originally their disapproval was rooted in the desire to separate the public relations occupation from that of press agency” (p. 114). In 1954, the IPR returned to the subject in a discussion of measurement of editorial publicity. The unnamed author comments:

Totting up column inches in terms of advertising still goes on. As Alan Hess [a former IPR President] has pointed out, matter of advertising nature should never be submitted for editorial use and, if it is, goes straight on the spike. Cheese cannot be compared with chalk. What matters in editorial publicity is whether the release is being read by the right people and whether they are reacting favourably (IPR *Journal*, October 1954).

8. Hidden expansion

By the 1950s, it can be argued that AVE was known to practitioners on both sides of the Atlantic and probably to academics who were in touch with organisations, agencies and alumni. However, it remained an underground practice. It is not mentioned, even with a warning, in leading texts of the time, such as the first edition of Cutlip and Center's *Effective Public Relations* (1952) or in Edward L. Bernays' texts of the period – *Public Relations* (1952) and *Engineering of Consent* (1955). Cutlip and Center discuss media analysis methods mainly by reference to audience measurement and message reception rather

than clipping counts. Cutlip's public relations bibliography (2nd edition, 1965) has a sub-section on Program Research and Evaluation covering 159 articles which started in 1939 and continued to the mid-1960s. There are 15 articles on mass media measurement and two on the effectiveness of clipping services. None referred to AVE.

In Germany, the public relations pioneer Albert Oeckl discussed public relations research methods in his 1964 book, *Handbuch der Public Relations* (Handbook of Public Relation) including quantitative approaches such as coding of media coverage but not of valuation in the AVE style. In the UK, the IPR's first text book, *A Guide to the Practice of Public Relations*, barely discusses evaluation in a chapter on media relations noting only that "the volume of press enquiries may indicate that the field is one of widespread public interest and concern" (IPR, 1958, p. 62) and recommending that analysis of press enquiries be undertaken regularly (IPR, 1958). In 1969, Frank Jefkins, a prolific UK author of public relations books, also inveighed against the use of AVE in his trenchant style:

Nor is there any sense in trying to assess an advertisement rate-card value on editorial coverage, saying these inches would have cost so much if the space had been paid for, for the elementary reason that no-one would use the same space, the same quantity of space, or perhaps even the same media for advertising purposes. There is no logical basis for financial evaluation, although it is true that a count of inches does indicate that there was a substantial coverage of the story, and circulation figures – and readership figures, too – could be totalled to show the possible number of subscribers or readers who had an opportunity to read the report or see the pictures (Jefkins, 1969, p. 227).

Another British author, John Crisford, also attacked the valuation of "free space" as being "just plain silly", like Jefkins indicating that it was being used widely, if not in common practice:

Should cuttings be counted? The practice of totting up column inches in the editorial columns, working out the advertising rates for a similar amount of space, and then claiming that the press office has produced so many pounds worth of "free space" is just plain silly. Statistics should, however, be kept – not to compare like with unlike, but to compare like with like" (Crisford, 1973, p. 59).

9. AVE emerges

By the mid-1960s, there was anecdotal evidence that AVE was being widely used by public relations operations in major organisations. John W. Felton, former CEO of the Institute for Public Relations, recalls their application in his own working experience at a major corporation:

Way back in 1966, when I was in the product publicity unit of US Steel in Pittsburgh, PA, our boss Tex Wurzbach, counted product clips we generated and equated the space we "earned free" to the amount that the same space would have cost if we had purchased it as ads. He justified our budgets for photos, travel, etc. by using the amount of space we got "free" might have cost if ads had been placed. That's not quite the same as multiplying by some number such as six but it is part of the same concept of AVEs. . . We generated a huge amount of clips so you can imagine how big the ad costs might have been if we had paid for that much space in major publications. He always got big budgets for us to spend! (J. Felton, personal correspondence, December 2010).

Merims (1972), in a review of product publicity methods by his analysis of 1971 PRSA Silver Anvil promotional publicity category entries, was an advocate of AVE:

Many in the publicity field malign this type of advertising-substitution measurement. But I believe it has validity. No one questions advertising's key role in the selling process, and corporate managements probably understand advertising better than publicity. If results show lower costs for publicity space than for advertising space and readership studies indicate that news media about a product is read and believed more than ads in the same publications, then management has a useful measuring rod (p. 112).

Merims, who was a public relations manager at Motorola, added a caveat that "achievement of one's goals is a measure of success" (Merims, 1972, p. 112) and placed AVE into a category of placing a financial value on meeting goals. Media measurement companies which had been formed from clippings agencies were also using AVE by the mid-1970s. "Media values were pretty much in place when we got involved with [media monitoring company] BurrellesLuce in the 70s, but generally they were produced by agencies . . . and generally with a multiplier" (J. Waggoner, personal communication, February 9, 2011).

10. Service sector develops

US industry veteran Mark Weiner has commented (M. Weiner, personal communication, February 16, 2011) that PR industry growth in North American and Europe in the 1960s and 1970s was a key reason for the introduction of measurement services. Consumer public relations developed rapidly in the 1950s and 1960s during the post war economic boom, aided by the widespread access to television which had also fostered advertising's expansion. The major US public relations groups (Barnet & Reef, Burson-Marsteller, and Hill & Knowlton) needed world-wide monitoring and management systems that gave systematic data back to client HQs. These developments led to the emergence of the service industries, especially in the

measurement of PR activity. A pioneer was PR Data, formed from an internal General Electric operation by Jack Schoonover. It was the first to use computer based analysis – using punch-cards and simple programmes (Tirone, 1977). It was soon followed by other providers, mainly press cuttings agencies which became evaluators. Weiner says that the calculation of AVE was amongst the services offered by PR Data, although not the primary service. By improving the speed and accuracy of calculation, these businesses enabled the wider use of AVE which became a mainstream topic, aided by practitioner commentators.

From the late 1960s onwards, the advertising value was often enhanced by multipliers. Ruff (1968) was one of the first to claim that non-advertising publicity could provide greater value than advertising. He undertook a comparative study of product inquiries in which promotional messages for a new product were distributed by publicity in key media and through print advertisements. “Ruff calculated publicity outperformed advertising for that . . . product by a seven to one ratio, but noted that for some publications the ratio was only 2.5 to one, and for others, the reverse was the case and advertising outperformed by publicity by a 2.5 to one ratio” (Macnamara, 2008, p. 2). These claims of public relations multipliers linked to AVE were endorsed in public relations and marketing communications trade press and journals (Bumsted, 1983; Strenski, 1980).

11. 1980s – continued academic rejection

Following on from the initial conferences and academic journal discussion late in the previous decade, US journals came alive in the 1980s with papers on research-based measurement and evaluation methods (Broom & Dozier, 1983; Dozier, 1984; Dozier, 1985; Grunig, 1979; Grunig, 1983; Grunig & Hickson, 1976). From the consultancy side, Lloyd Kirban of Burson Marsteller (Kirban, 1983) and Walter Lindenmann of Ketchum (Lindenmann, 1979; Lindenmann, 1980) were prolific and drove the subject higher on the practitioner agenda. In the UK, White (1990) undertook the first study of practitioner attitudes amongst member consultancies of the Public Relations Consultants Association (PRCA) and offered recommendations on evaluation ‘best practice’. All authors emphasised the need for public relations to be researched, planned and evaluated using robust social science techniques. None mentioned AVE.

The most enduring input into development of applied theory was the evolution of Excellence Theory which first appeared in the early 1990s (Grunig, 1992) and has gone through further iterations to become the dominant normative theory of public relations practice. Grunig (2006, p. 8) has commented that “public relations could not have a role in strategic communication unless its practitioners had a way to measure effectiveness”. In the 1980s, he researched notions of financial results arising from public relations activity, but AVE had no role in Excellence Theory. It rejected “any simplistic notion that the only relevant contribution public relations makes is a monetary one – direct to the bottom line” (Grunig, 1992, p. 97). Indeed, the use of AVE and other metrics like Return on Investment (ROI) places public relations into the “symbolic, interpretive paradigm” (Grunig, 2009, p. 9) that focuses on publicity messaging. Later, this paper argues that public relations has long been two quite distinct practices, as evidenced by the wide usage of AVE.

12. AVE thrives, despite education campaigns

By the early 1990s, public relations measurement and evaluation was a leading research and professional practice topic (McElreath, 1989; Synnott & McKie, 1997; Watson, 2008; White & Blamphin, 1994). There were major practitioner education initiatives in several developed countries, many linked closely to the Excellence Theory expression of public relations as communication management. The late 1990s also saw the launch of extensive national campaigns to promote best practice in measurement and evaluation in the UK and US. Grunig (2008) cites 1996 as a pivotal year, an “explosion of interest” (p. 8) that lasted throughout the decade. There were further industry educational initiatives in the UK in the 21st century’s first decade with the CIPR preparing a media evaluation version of its previous Evaluation Toolkit document (CIPR, 2010b).

The service business of media measurement and public relations effectiveness evaluation grew rapidly, mainly with corporate clients. Its debates about the legitimacy of AVE and a desire to create world-wide standards resulted in the adoption of The Barcelona Declaration of Measurement Principles at the European Summit on Measurement in June 2010 (AMEC, 2010a). The Barcelona Declaration also demonstrated that public relations measurement and evaluation is an important, growing service business. Amongst its outcomes, as discussed earlier, was Principle 5 that rejected the role of AVE in public relations measurement.

13. Conclusion – PR sector in diverging paths

Measurement practice shows that AVE lives on despite extensive, persistent criticism by industry leaders and prominent academics, and rejection in the Barcelona Principles. Their appeal is simplicity and an economic outcome, as noted by Leinemann and Baikaltseva (2004) and Morris and Goldsworthy (2012), which is favoured by financially-minded managers. As Watson (2012) has commented: “Perhaps this signifies an immature profession, which is unconfident in its practices” (p. 17). It may also demonstrate that the universe of public relations has for a long time been separated into two divergent paths: publicity and “PR” – the short-termist tactical approach that relies on intuition, past experience and crude metrics, which is the “symbolic, interpretivist” approach (Grunig, 2009, p. 9) and Communication Management or Organisational Communication which employs social science-led planning, research and evaluation methods in search of mutual

understanding. This can be mapped against the “strategic management, behavioural” paradigm (Grunig, 2009, p. 9). Publicity, comments Grunig (2009), is “the one worldwide universal in public relations practice (and) the least effective of the models” (p. 2). Some critical scholars view Publicity/PR as the way by which public relations is normally practiced; two-way models of communication management/organisation communication in the ‘strategic management’ paradigm are aspirational, at best (Weaver, Motion, & Roper, 2006). The survival of the “persistent weed” that is AVE (Geddes, 2011), despite 60 years of well-researched warnings against use, cannot be underestimated and favours an interpretation that public relations is getting wider and wider apart in its practices.

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